## REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action dated February 27, 2009. Claims 1, 2, 5 and 7 to 17 are pending in the present application. Claims 3, 4 and 6 stand canceled. Claims 1, 2, 5 and 7 to 9 are hereby amended. Claims 1 and 7 to 9 are in independent form. Please charge Deposit Account No. 02-1818 for all payments due in connection with this Response.

The Office Action rejected Claims 1, 2, 5, and 7 to 17 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,732,148 to Estrada et al. ("Estrada"), U.S. Patent No. 6,772,195 to Hatlelid et al. ("Hatlelid"), U.S. Patent No. 6,446,112 to Bunney et al. ("Bunney"), and U.S. Patent No. 6,496,851 to Morris et al. ("Morris") and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,281,898 to Nikolovska et al. ("Nikolovska"). The Office Action stated that these rejections are further supported by mIRC Version Notes taken from http://www.mirc.co.uk/versions.txt ("mIRC Version Notes"). In light of the amendments herein, Applicant respectfully disagrees with these rejections.

Estrada discloses a system and method for interconnecting secure rooms. The Abstract of Estrada discloses:

> Collaboration space object model provides for a Place consisting of rooms. A room is made up of pages. Folders are used to organize pages. Members belong to rooms, and are those users authorized to access them. Place type controls the creation of a place, including how many rooms it has, for example. Room type controls the appearance and content of rooms. A form manages the display of data notes. A form can contain fields for containing data and employ scripts to process and compute data. A page is the basic vehicle for content. Content is created using an or importing content from an external source. A member is also a data note, and each place contains its own member directory. A place is created and managed from a client browser in on-line mode and in offline mode with respect to a replicated copy of the space. Room security is independently managed, and security and aesthetics characteristics of subrooms selectively inherited. Room navigation and workflow processing is provided, as are forms creation and uploading from browser to server.

Hatlelid discloses chat clusters for a virtual world application. The Abstract of Hatlelid discloses:

> A virtual world environment is provided having chat clusters. Chat clusters are groupings of avatars of users who are engaged in a closed conversation. Accordingly, a request to initiate a chat cluster is received from a user. Next, the

other participants of the chat cluster are identified, and a conversation area within the virtual environment is defined. The conversation area is a unseen demarcated area within which the avatars of the participants are positioned. The conversation area is generated responsive to the number of participants in the chat cluster, i.e., for two participants, the area is small, and for a cluster with many participants, the conversation area is large. Then, the avatars are oriented within the conversation toward each other. If the conversation area is a circular area, the avatars face the center of the circle. When displayed to the users of the virtual world, the avatars appear to be naturally displayed as groups of people having conversations with each other. Thus, new users can immediately identify which users are conversing with each other, and can tell which users are available for approach. Once initiating a chat cluster, the participants of the chat cluster broadcast their communications on a chat cluster communication channel, and the user's view of the virtual world focuses on the other participants of the chat cluster. The chat cluster communication channel conducts communications from participants only to other participants of the chat cluster and blocks communications from those not part of the chat cluster.

Bunney discloses an IRC name translation protocol. The Abstract of Bunney discloses:

A network comprising at least one server (1) and a plurality of user terminals (3), wherein the user terminals (3) can communicate with each other by means of an IRC server (40). The user terminal (3) can send a command to a chat proxy (39). The chat proxy (39) is connected with a session manager (23) to translate any address longer than nine characters (limit of the IRC protocol) to a code with a maximum length of nine characters. The chat proxy (39) can cache the result of the conversion in a storage device (42). The chat proxy (39) then sends (41) an IRC command to the IRC server (40) together with a code having a maximum number of nine characters. The chat proxy (39) according to the present invention therefore allows a translation process, the provision of semi-private chat rooms with an additional access control and a supply of supplemental chat room attributes.

Morris discloses managing negotiations between users of a computer network by automatically engaging in proposed activity using parameters of counterproposal of other user. The Abstract of Morris discloses:

Interactions between users of a computer network are facilitated by transmitting a first user's proposal for an activity to another user, with the proposal including one or more parameters descriptive of the proposed activity. A response received from the other user may include a counterproposal having one or more parameters descriptive of the proposed activity, with at least one of the parameters of the counterproposal differing from a corresponding parameter of the proposal. The users automatically engage in the proposed activity using the parameters included in the counterproposal upon acceptance of the counterproposal by the first user.

Nikolovska discloses spatial browsing approach to multimedia information retrieval. The Abstract of Nikolovska discloses:

> A three dimensional user interface allows browsing of a database displayed as a three dimensional information space. The data is organized along three axes. A current plane or layer of data is summarized on an information landscape, with different planes being selectable using a tower that is located at the intersection of the three axes. A control wall with incorporated tools is used to formulate database queries. A preview wall previews selected data. The preview wall also provides transition between previewing the searches in the 3D space and actual viewing of the programming in full screen 2D display. Application to TV programming data is shown.

Page 6 of the Office Action stated:

> it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Estrada, Hatlelid, Bunney, Morris, and Nikoloska before him at the time the invention was made to modify the graphic chat of Estrada, Hatlelid, Bunney, and Morris to include the three-dimensional listings of Nikolovska.

Applicant respectfully disagrees and submits that regardless of whether it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Estrada, Hatlelid, Bunney, Morris, and Nikoloska before him at the time the invention was made to modify the graphic chat of Estrada, Hatlelid, Bunney, and Morris to include the three-dimensional listings of Nikolovska, neither Estrada, Hatlelid, Bunney, Morris or Nikolovska individually nor the information processing apparatus resulting from the combination of Estrada, Hatlelid, Bunney, Morris and Nikolovska disclose a memory device storing instructions, which when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: (a) maintain a user space within the virtual space, wherein (i) the user space comprises spatial locations that virtually represent areas owned and occupied by a first user; (ii) the spatial locations are rendered as three dimensional images; (iii) the spatial locations including: (A) a first spatial location rendered as a first three dimensional image; and (B) a second spatial location rendered as a second three dimensional image; and (b) place the list of spatial locations at a position in the first spatial location rendered as the first three dimensional image, wherein: (i) the position in the first three dimensional spatial location is designated by the first user; and (ii) in response to the at least one third user selecting the second spatial location from the list of spatial locations which is placed at the position by the first user, a graphical

representation of the at least one third user is moved from the first spatial location to the second special location.

Additionally, it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Estrada, Hatlelid, Bunney, Morris and Nikolovska to result in such an information processing apparatus without reasonably being construed as improper hindsight reconstruction. On the other hand the information processing apparatus of amended independent Claim 1 includes, among other elements, a memory device storing instructions, which when executed by the processor, cause the processor to: (a) maintain a user space within the virtual space, wherein (i) the user space comprises spatial locations that virtually represent areas owned and occupied by a first user; (ii) the spatial locations are rendered as three dimensional images; (iii) the spatial locations including: (A) a first spatial location rendered as a first three dimensional image; and (B) a second spatial location rendered as a second three dimensional image; and (b) place the list of spatial locations at a position in the first spatial location rendered as the first three dimensional image, wherein: (i) the position in the first three dimensional spatial location is designated by the first user; and (ii) in response to the at least one third user selecting the second spatial location from the list of spatial locations which is placed at the position by the first user, a graphical representation of the at least one third user is moved from the first spatial location to the second special location.

No new matter has been added by such amendments. Support for these amendments can be found, for example, in at least paragraphs [0036], [0039] to [0041], [0084] to [0086] and [0096] of the published application.

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claim 1 is patentably distinguished over Estrada, Hatlelid, Bunney, Morris and Nikolovska and in condition for allowance. Dependent Claims 2, 5 and 14 depend directly from amended independent Claim 1 and are also allowable for the reasons given with respect to Claim 1 and because of the additional features recited in these claims.

Independent Claims 7, 8 and 9 each include certain similar elements to independent Claim 1. For reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to independent Claim 1, independent Claims 7, 8 and 9 (and dependent Claims 10 to 13 and 15 to 17) are each patentably

distinguished over Estrada, Hatlelid, Bunney, Morris and Nikolovska and in condition for allowance.

An earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for formal allowance, and allowance is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Response, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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